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Statement submitted by Project 1948 Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

On behalf of civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Project 1948 Foundation would like to express our deepest gratitude to United Nations Women for the opportunity to provide a written statement to the Commission for the Status of Women 2019.

At Project 1948 Foundation, we use our photo-voice program to identify, represent, and enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women. In partnership with Post-Conflict Research Center, our photo-voice program helps the global community see through a new lens, by telling the story of community concerns through media documentation while amplifying the voice of civil society and using innovative data as a platform for policy-change. Together, our work has unearthed a shared challenge which unites Bosnia and Herzegovina's tripartite state; only 65 per cent of citizens have access to clean and safe drinking water, the second lowest in Europe. Inefficient public water companies, informal housing constructed after the war and failure to secure necessary funding for vital works to develop dilapidated infrastructure have led to the current service failure. Although water is Bosnia and Herzegovina's most abundant natural resource, the water crisis is widespread across all scales of inhibition, affecting citizens settled in rural communities to the urbanized regions of Banja Luka and Sarajevo, alike. On behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina's communities, we urge the member state of Bosnia and Herzegovina to fulfil the United Nations Fundamental Human Right of access to clean water and sanitation for all citizens, independent of gender identity, ethnic background or socioeconomic status.

Addressing said challenges through a truly sustainable development model in the water infrastructure sector has the opportunity to transform our global society through water exportation from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ultimately, our organizations believe focused energy of the government, private sector, and civil society is needed to fully eradicate this issue to engage in progress with fulfilment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 6, but also Goal 5. Inextricably linked, improvement of water provision will empower women and girls whose daily routines are disproportionately affected by the public services current failings, progressing Bosnia and Herzegovina's journey towards gender parity by 2030.

We must commit to not only invest in gender equality, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender inclusiveness, and the empowerment of women and girls, but we must understand how imperative it is to budget for the access to clean and safe drinking water. Although our organizations have founders from the United States, we have received no on-ground support from government entities including, the United States and Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, we need the public and private investment in order to improve water supply and sanitation and water resources management at the country-level cost. And, by our non-governmental organizations estimate, it is clear that meeting such investment challenges is reachable.

Clearly, we see obstacles framed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where our organizations conduct much of its work for the successful implementation of social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Currently, the country in which we work has placed as the very last member state to achieve the 2030 Agenda. We strongly urge the United Nations, government entities, civil society, and the private sector to move forward in joint efforts in helping Bosnia and Herzegovina achieve the 2030 Agenda with providing access to public services and sustainable

infrastructure in water governance with gender inclusiveness furthering the empowerment of every man, woman and child in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We would like the thank the United Nations for their continued support of our grassroots organizations and partnerships that have emerged through the Economic and Social Council with United Nations Volunteers, Smartly Consulting, Data Scientists Without Borders and the United Nations House of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Lastly, Project 1948 Foundation, Post-Conflict Research Center, and United Nations House of Bosnia and Herzegovina would like to reaffirm our commitment to collaboratively meet the Beijing Declaration on Platform for Action with change makers at all levels of government and with United Nations leaders around the globe.